of politicals, whom he respected as educated people. And since he believed his main responsibility was to prevent the escape of the prisoners, he made a pact with the politicals.

Saur became the official spokesman of the Collective. Zhdanov took charge of newly arrived parties and the prison library. But the soul of the organization was Eugene Timofeev, the politicals' headman for internal affairs. Nobody could match him for patience and tact. His life and death are characteristic of the thorny path of Russian revolutionaries of his generation. Liberated by the revolution of 1917 after eleven years in prison, he was again arrested by the Soviets for defending the Constituent Assembly and sentenced to death. The verdict was suspended; he was kept in prison for several years as a hostage and then exiled to Siberia. Time and again he was arrested, released, and rearrested. In 1936 or 1937 he disappeared. It is not known whether he met death in a torture chamber or was shot.

In my time, the political Collective consisted of some two hundred men. Probably a hundred more used services of the organization without being members. The main privilege of the politicals was that, thanks to segregation, they could keep their wards clean and could organize their life according to a self-imposed timetable—"Constitution." The morning hours were used for cleaning the ward; next came two hours of silence for the benefit of those who wished to read or study; an hour after lunch was free of restrictions; then again two hours of silence, and so on. In the ward to which I was assigned, the evenings were devoted to lectures and "organized" entertainment.

The Collective enjoyed two other privileges: the politicals were allowed to keep samovars—Russian-type teakettles—and make tea after the evening inspection, and they also had control over the prison library, which consisted of books donated by their relatives and friends. These books were classified under a dozen headings, and those dealing with economic and social problems were catalogued separately and marked with an asterisk on the back.

The gendarmes got wind of the existence of the samovars in the political wards and of the "asterisk section" in the library. They questioned the superintendent, who denied everything. Not satisfied, the gendarmes complained to the prison inspector in Irkutsk, and a curious feud developed between the prison inspector, backed by the gendarmes, and the superintendent, supported by the Governor General, Kniazev. The prison inspector was bent on seizing our samovars and the marked books. He used to try to catch us by surprise, but his office was in Irkutsk, and to reach Alexandrovsk he had to cross the Angara River by ferry. The ferry was manned by former convicts, and the superintendent instructed them to telephone his office when the enemy was approaching. This warning gave the penitentiary guards